

'Everybody's Well' - Impacting health behaviors and building wellness support (FY02 – 2000)

Impact

Regular program participation resulted in improved health status as measured by pre- and post-intervention fitness assessments.

Description

"Everybody's Well" was a health education program that consisted of health and wellness workshops offered to a population of more than 2000 adults. The goal of the initiative was to positively impact health behaviors and provide an informal network of support during a 6-month deployment. The objective was to reach at least 10 percent of the target population (approximately 240 family members).

Outcomes

The individuals who participated regularly had improved health knowledge as measured by pre- and post-intervention knowledge tests, as well as improved fitness levels. However, this participant sample was too small to draw any conclusions. Overall, the workshop-centered approach did not attract as much participation as was hoped for. The program was modified several times with input from surveys and focus groups, but community response remained low.

Barriers

Childcare issues proved to be a barrier to consistent program participation. There were many, many inquiries for "free childcare so I can go to the gym." When informed that childcare support was contingent on program participation and monitoring, most chose not to follow up.

Innovative features

- The initiative assumed a user-defined shape through the use of participant and non-participant interviews and focus groups.
- The initiative encouraged event participation by providing affordable childcare.

Lessons learned

- The regular participants chose to attend initiative activities independent of childcare considerations.
- Rather than trying to create a new program from the ground up, health promotion practitioners should partner as often as possible with already-existing programs, such as MWR Fitness Activities or the Chaplain-led Building Strong and Ready Families.
- Every health promotion program should include components that will specifically address individuals in the pre-contemplation and/or contemplation stages of change, instead of assuming that all participants will come to the activity in the 'action' stage.